Jovis 13. die *Junii* Anno Regni *Caroli Secundi* Regis 13.

ORdered, *that the Thanks of this House be returned to Dr.* Earl *Dean of* VVestminster, *and Mr.* Grenfeild *Preacher to the Society of* Lincoln's-Inne, *for the Sermons they Preached yesterday, and that they be desired to print their Sermons: And Mr.* Smyth *is desired to return the Thanks of this House to Mr. Dean* Earl, *and Mr.* Pryn *to Mr.* Grenfeild.

VVill: Goldesbrough

Cler. Dom. Com.

G 1937.

THE FAST:

As it was delivered in a

SERMON

At St. *Margarets* in *Weſtminſter*, before the Honourable Houſe of COMMONS upon *Wedneſday* the 12th. of *June* 1661. being the day appointed by His Majeſty and the Parliament, for a ſolemn Humiliation upon the late abundance of Rain, and the danger of Famine, and Peſtilence likely to enſue thereby.

By THO: GRENFEILD *A. M.* Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Lincoln's-Inne.*

LUC: 22. 28, 29.

You are they which have continued with me in my temptations: And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.

Ubi malos præmia ſequuntur, haud facilè quiſquam gratuitò bonus eſt.
Saluſt. ad Cæſarem.

Suum cuique tribue,
Hoc fac & vives.

LONDON,
Printed for *Henry Brome* at the *Gun* in *Ivy lane*, 1661.

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THE LAST SERMON

59-1050 M

To the Honourable the House of COMMONS, Now in Parliament Assembled,

εὐπρέπειαν.

Gentlemen,

OU have desired me to Print my Sermon, and I desire you to practise it; because, 'tis never so well Printed, as when 'tis practised: And give me leave to tell you, that if I could order you so well, as you can order me, you should practise it as well as I Print it: Nevertheless, I will perform my part.

Our present age has been an age of wonders, I offer onely three (and those the greatest of them) to your consideration: We have had the best of Princes barbarously murthered; A banisht Prince miraculously restored; And a Loyall people (as yet) but badly requited.

To the first of these you owe your solemn sorrows, for the second your constant thanks, and to the third your just compassions.

For these I was willing to obey your commands, for these I chose my Text, for these I have pleaded, and for these I have done, what I never did before, I have Printed what was pleaded for them, that, in case they miss of any other or better remembrance, (as they have done hitherto) yet they may meet with some slender one at least upon a paper.

'Tis confest, you have done your duty well and handsomely to the two first of these wonders, by answering them both, with proportionable and becoming affections; you have mourned soundly for the first, and rejoyced lustily at the second: These things you ought to have done, yet not to leave the other undone; undone it is as yet, and so are they for whom it should be done; and they can say it from as profound an Experience, as any part of Mankind: Eccles. 8.

14. There is a vanity, which is done upon the earth, that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: Again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.

It is this Subject, *I am now upon, a very poor one, yet a very good one; and a very good one, because a very Loyall one, and if Novelty makes any thing acceptable (as it does) then this paper may challenge your acceptance, because it treats of a* Subject *never (as yet) thought upon, of a* Subject *never handled by any, but very coursly, very wrongfully.*

It is now in your power to do them right, that have suffered wrong, and to feed and relieve these hungry ones, and the honour of the Action will be this, that hereby you will be followers of God: For, the Lord executeth judgment for the oppressed, he giveth food to the hungry, he looseth the prisoners, and raiseth them that are bowed down, *Psal.* 146. 7, 8. Be ye therefore mercifull even as your heavenly Father is mercifull: *As he is, now, he is mercifull both to the just, and to the unjust; be mercifull to both you may, but, to be mercifull to the unjust onely, and not to the just also, this is cruelty; if honest men may not have the preference in your mercy, you cannot do less, then let them go sharers with others, that have far less (if at all) deserv'd it.*

'Tis very possible, (and, I fear very probable,) that many years may not bring forth such a Temper, and Complexion of Parliament, *as this is, in which you sit: for, 'tis a thing as full of Hazard, as the project of the* great Elixar, *which misses a hundred times, before it hits once; your children to many generations may sadly desire to see one of the days of such a* Convention, *and yet not*

see

see it: Therefore, behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation: To day therefore (after so long a time) whilst it is said, to day, harden not your hearts; *if you do, and (with* Esau) *sell your own, and others* birth-rights, afterwards, when you would inherit the blessing, you will be rejected, though you seek it carefully with tears.

You love, and are for Loyalty, *I know you are; and if you be, then cherish what you love: let that Tree have the most, and best* care and water, *the best* soil and sence; *which gives you the Fruit you most love.*

It was a cruelty no where to be found, but in a Nero, Ardet Roma, dum cythara canit: *And shall we (as Israel,* Amos 6. 4, 5, 6.) lye upon beds of Ivory, and stretch our selves upon our Couches, and eat the lambs out of the Flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall? shall we chant to the sound of the Viol, & invent to our selves instruments of Musick? shall we drink wine in bowls, and anoint our selves with the chief oyntments, and not be grieved for the Affliction of *Joseph? If so, what will follow? even the judgment we now fear,* v. 7. the banquet of them, that stretched themselves, shall be removed.

I am apt to think, that David *blusht, when* having obtained rest from all his Enemies round about, and sitting quietly in his house, *he told the Prophet,* 2 Sam. 7. 1, 2. See now, I dwell in a house of Cedar, but the Arke of God dwelleth within curtains; *and they were very course ones too, for they were made of Goats-hair: Such a blush would become you, and you will never look so handsomly, as when this brings up the Reds into your Cheeks, to consider, that the Lord hath given you Rest, and hath set you down peaceably in your houses; and yet all this while,*

theſe Men *(like the Arke) remain clad in courſe and torn garments, and though the foxes have holes; and the birds of the Ayre have neſts, yet theſe men have not a place where to lay down their heads.*

——pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuiſſe, & non potuiſſe refelli.

Methinks, 'tis enough to make you ſhake, and ſweat again, to conſider how open you lye to the juſt complaints of theſe poor ſouls, *if they ſhould beſpeak you in the language of the Apoſtle, (then in a caſe much like theirs now,)* 1 Cor. 4. 8. *&c.* Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us, and we would to God, ye did reign, that we alſo might reign with you: For we think, that God hath ſet forth us laſt, as it were men appointed to death; for we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men: we are fools, but ye are wiſe; we are weak, but ye are ſtrong; ye are honourable, but we are deſpiſed: Even unto this preſent hour we both hunger, and thirſt, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place: And labour, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted, we ſuffer it; being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.

And if this be their Caſe, (as indeed it is,) then, how juſt and ingenuous will it be for you, to conſider it: And remember, that if it be juſt and good with God, that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, ſhould work for us a far more exceeding, and eternall weight of glory: *then certainly he will not take it well at your hands,*

hands, if their heavy Afflictions, which have been for many years, ſhould work nothing for them, but a far more exceeding, and inſupportable weight of want and miſery.

I have forgot the name, *but I remember the* vertue *of that great Commander, who, when his Army was much diſtreſt in point of* Aquation, *a bottle of water was preſented to himſelf by one of his ſouldiers, he flung it on the ground, and this after it,* God forbid, that I ſhould drink, when my poor ſouldiers are periſhing with thirſt: *And the kindneſs of* Alexander *(if* Curtius *may be credited) was as great as himſelf, who in a cold froſty night, ſitting by a great fire in the open field, and eſpying a poor ſouldier upon an out guard ready to drop down dead with the Cold, ran to him, took him up in his Armes, brought him to the Fire, ſet him in his own chair, rubb'd and chafed him with his own hands, and with much adoe brought him to life: Theſe wiſe men knew this to be the way, to oblige an Army to them.*

I leave this with you, to apply, and to divine, what I mean by it; and withall, you may do well to remember, how many of your own Families received both their Honours *and* Eſtates *from the* Norman ſervice: *That* juſt Prince *thought it his duty to requite his* Souldiers, *and if you would know the* Engliſh *of* Miles, Eques, Comes, *&c. which you now wear about your Eſchutcheons, they are* flowers *which grew up out of* that Field, *far unlike thoſe weeds, which now ſpring from a ſervice as ingenuous and juſt as that, for which the Herauldry is ſo much altered, that they yet wear no other badge, then* Pedes, Pauper, Famelicus, *for being Loyall to their Prince.*

Methinks, 'tis not ſo handſome, to ſee a Nation, (that was lately Gules *all over) now to ſtand checker'd* Argent *&* Sable, *and to behold our late* great Mercy of our Soveraigns Reſtauration *like that Pillar,* Exod. 14. 20. Cloud

and

and darkneſs to ſome, but light to others; *nor are things well in Tune, when* (*as at the building of the ſecond Temple*, Ezra 3. 13.) *we cannot diſcern the noiſe of the ſhout of joy, from the noiſe of the weeping of the people, when one part* (*the more ancient and righteous*) *may weep it out with the Poet*,

——Hæc ego,—— tulit alter honores,
Sic vos non vobis————

And another (*more novell and criminall,*) *ſhall triumph it with an* O quàm bonum & jucundum, *&c. Oh how pleaſant and profitable a thing it is, to fight againſt our Soveraign! whereas the truth is, Juſtice can never ſpeak better ſenſe, then when it doth upbraid ſuch demeriting perſons with that Sarcaſme of the Apoſtle*, Rom. 6. 21. τίνα καρπὸν? what fruit would you have from thoſe things, whereof you are now aſhamed? For the end of ſuch things is Death.

And let no man recriminate this addreſs, *from the intemperance and debauchery of the perſons, for whom 'tis made. I remember the check and aſperſion, given of old by the Phariſees to Chriſt, who cenſured him* for eating with Publicans and Sinners, *When he had no where elſe to go: 'Tis a very hard piece of Juſtice, to cenſure and condemn men for eating and drinking in publick houſes, when they have* no houſes left them of their own, to eat and to drink in.

If there be Oathes and Atheiſme, &c. more viſible among them, then others, it will lie very much at the doors of their Oppreſſors. David *had loſt almoſt all his Religion, by the contemplation of the good ſucceſs of evil men*, Pſal. 73. *Do them right, and try what they will be, ſurely thoſe conſciences,*

ſciences, which have worn about them ſuch deep impreſſions and reſentments of Loyalty and Honour *all this while, (and that at ſo great adiſadvantage) muſt in charity be hoped to have other good principles of Morality alſo, which though perhaps they lie now in a ſwound, yet they may be awakned into practiſe by your juſt* Encouragements, *and 'tis ten to one, but you will thereby reſtore them, not onely to their Rights and Fortunes, but to their wits and vertues. A breath from your lips is able to quicken this field of dry bones into an Army of Vertuoſo's.*

I will not preſcribe to your wiſdoms what to do for them, nor adventure at reaſons of State, *why ſomething muſt be done: There are many and great ones, but you can give them to your ſelves; they are thoſe of Religion, which I offer you, and if Juſtice and Charity be your duties, and the* Compaſſe *of your actions, then this is.*

If you will do no more for them, yet remember them, give them (at leaſt) a place in your Annalls and Records; God has (among many other books) a book of Remembrance, Mal. 3. 16. *and in this book he records the ſufferings of good men,* Pſal. 56. 8. Their tears are put up in his bottle, and written in his book.

And it ſeems by that paſſage concerning Mordecai, Heſt. 6. 1, 2, 3. *that it was the manner of the Eaſtern Princes to record* the ſervices and ſufferings *of good ſubjects to poſterity, as ſoon as they were done or ſuffered: And there were Scribes among the Jews (if my conjecture fail not) whoſe peculiar office it was to do this; and truly the example of* Ahaſuerus *there, deſerves to be commended to the practiſe of Princes, ver. 1. he was reading one night in this book of* Records, *and found the good ſervice of* Mordecai, *in diſcovering a Treaſon againſt his perſon, v. 2. and then puts a queſtion (and it is* Quæſtio rege digna) what Ho-

noun

nour and dignity hath been done to *Mordecai* for this? *v.* 3. *'twas answered*, there is nothing done for him, *but it was not long ere ſomething was.*

If theſe and the following lines, may have the happineſs to move you to put the ſame queſtion for our Mordicai's, What hath been done for them? *and upon finding, that as yet nothing is done for them, to put it further to the queſtion*, what ſhall be done for them? *God ſhall have his will, I my end, they the comfort, and you the honour, of ſo juſt and brave an Action.*

Lincoln's-Inne July, 6th. 1661.

Which ſhall ever be the prayer of your moſt devoted ſervant in the things of God and his Righteouſneſs,

THOMAS GRENFEILD.

ISAY 58. 5, 6, 7.

5. *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a Bull-rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?*

6. *Is not this* THE FAST *that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undoe the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*

7. *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh?*

YOU are met this day upon a very great and important work, and you have summon'd hither a poor and weak man to assist you in it; one that had more need to be fasted for, then able to direct others, one who is (as at no time able, so) at this time not willing to dress out the business before us with Elocution; and the rather, because as it is the custom of Mourners, to despoile their garments of all Ribbonds

and other dreſſes when they Mourn; ſo I think, if plain garments be faſhionable there, a plain Sermon will be ſeaſonable here.

This people (here concerned in the Text) were a Nation much addicted to outward and formall duties, and among others to this of faſting, the ſecond verſe before the Text will deſcribe you this; And how punctual and ceremonious they were in it, the 5. verſe (which is part of the Text) does decipher: It ſeems, this formality ran down the whole current of that generation, for when I look almoſt home to the end of it (in the days of Chriſt) I find the ſame humour ſtirring amongſt the *Phariſees*, of whom Chriſt ſayes, *Mat.* 6. 16. that when they faſted, they were σκυθρωποὶ: that is, (as one interprets it) they would look like *Scythians*; and they did (as is obſerved in the Text before mentioned) ἀφανίζειν, that is, they either cover'd their faces with black-hoods, or elſe (as one acutely obſerves it out of Antiquity) they uſed a paint or fucus to make them ſeem ſad and mortified; and the great errour of them was, to think that when this was done, the faſt was over.

Now the buſineſſe of this Text (with the cohærents) is to reprove, and with reproving to reject this formality of faſting, and to commend and teach the true reality of it.

And (indeed) theſe are the parts of the Text.

First, a formal faſt reproved and rejected, *v.* 5.

Secondly, a real faſt preſcribed and accepted, *v.* 6.

And both theſe are done in the way of expoſtulation, which argues a more then ordinary vehemency in what is ſpoken.

First, an expoſtulation in the Affirmative, *ver.* 5.

Is

Is it such a fast? which is an ardent Negation, signifying that by no means it is not at all such a fast.

Secondly, an expostulation in the Negative, *v.* 6, 7. *Is not this the fast, &c.* Intimating a most vigorous Affirmative: Certainly, assuredly, *this is the fast that I have chosen.*

So that in the first, all formalities of a fast (when they go alone) are rejected; these Jewish formalities in the Text, *to afflict the soul, to bow down the head like a Bullrush, &c.* and on the same score our Christian formalities of fasting all the day, meeting in the House of publick Worship, making long Prayers, and hearing five or six Sermons one on the neck of another, these (I say) when they go alone are rejected; and our own observation can testifie, they have been so.

And in the second the reall, proper, genuine duties of an acceptable fast are prescribed and directed, and those are two.

First, the duty of Justice unto men oppressed, *v.* 6.

Secondly, the duty of Charity to men ejected, *v.* 7.

And this is the fast that God hath chosen:

That, which (without any violence) is deducible from the Text, may be reduced to these three particulars, within which I shall confine all I have to say.

First, that fasting is a duty.

Secondly, that God in some cases does reject it.

Thirdly, what must be done to make it acceptable.

1. I begin with the first. That fasting is a duty, this is plain in the Text; where, though we have *rejectionem modi*, yet not *rei*, of that manner of fasting, not of fasting it self, *ver.* 4. we have not a peremptory, *non jejunabitis*, but a *non sic jejunabitis*; and in the 5. verse it is onely *tale jejunium*, not a fast at large, but such a

faſt that has nothing but formalities, and mediate duties in it, *vocem & preterea nihil*, a cymbal faſt, that makes a noiſe and hath no charity; this God rejecteth.

And the reaſon is, becauſe to the morall goodneſs of an action, there is required, not onely the matter and bulk of the fact, the manufacture and outward body of it, but many circumſtances to make it good, St. *Aug.* obſerves it in the point of delivering up Chriſt unto death, how much the end and intention in an act does diverſifie the act it ſelf; *Pater tradidit filium* (ſaith he) *Judas Dominum Chriſtus ſeipſum*, one and the ſame act (*viz.*) the giving up of Chriſt, was mercy in God, love in Chriſt, but treaſon in the Apoſtate. So here, as the Apoſtle ſays of the law, 1 *Tim.* 1. 8. that it is good if a man uſe it lawfully, ſo is the duty of faſting, good or evil, as it ſtands qualified by the end and intention of the perſons.

In the 4. verſe before the Text the faſt was evil, becauſe the intention was ſo, *The faſt for ſtrife and debate*, &c. and verſe 6. and 7. of the Text, the faſt is allowed to be good and acceptable, if it ſtand aſſociated with the duties of juſtice and mercy.

Clear it is then, that faſting is our duty, and the more clear, becauſe we have occaſions for it.

The Firſt one is judgement impending or incumbing, at the door, or in the houſe, *Iſa.* 22. 12. *Iſrael* was in danger of an invaſion, *and in that day* (ſaith the Prophet) *did the Lord call to weeping, and to mourning.*

Though we read not of any Prophet, that by word of mouth required the people to it; yet there was *vox virgæ*, *Mic.* 6. 9. the rod had a tongue, there was a Summons in the preſent providence, there was a *Hanibal ad portas*, the *Perſian* was at the gates.

And

And leſt the call of Providence ſhould be thought not loud enough, we have an expreſs ſummons from the Word to this duty, *Joel* 2. 15, 16, 17. the 15. ver. gives us the precept, *Sanctifie a faſt*, &c. the 16. verſe ſummons the perſons, and thoſe are all concerned, *the people, congregation, young and old*, &c. and the 17. verſe gives us the duty, prayer, *ſpare thy people O Lord*, &c. and this was the practice of *Iſrael* who like a flock of ſheep, though in times of ſafety and peace, they wandred abroad ſecurely in their ſeverall paſtures, yet when the dog or woolf drew near, they ran together to this duty.

Secondly, another occaſion to this duty, is ſome important enterpriſe or undertaking, that has danger and difficulty in it: Thus did *Heſter* who going to pacify the anger of *Ahaſuerus* towards the Jews, and to gain his favour (a thing dangerous, and difficult to be had from ſo great a Prince) bids the people *faſt for this, and not eat nor drink three days, night or day, and I (ſaid ſhe) and my maidens will faſt likewiſe, and ſo will I go to the King, (though it be not according to law,) and if I periſh I periſh*; And as the enterprize was great, ſo the faſt made it proſperous: Thus the Apoſtles, being to ordain, and ſend abroad Miniſters to the Gentiles, (an affair of greater danger and difficulty, (and importance too) then the former) *they prayed unto the Lord and faſted*, and having ſo done, *they laid their hands on* Barnabas *and* Saul, *and ſent them away*, Acts 13. 2, 3. which practiſe of theirs (methinks) gives no mean warrant to the obſervation of our Ember weeks, as preparatory to the laying on of hands. Heſt. 4. 16.

The things muſt be great and good; and when ſo, they muſt be faſted for; *not for ſtrife and debate, nor*

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to ſmite with the fiſt of wickedneſs, not for a proſperous rebellion, or regicide (for that's the engliſh of the former,) ſuch faſts are to be faſted for, and faſted from, and the late ſignall confutations given out by Providence upon ſuch faſts, are evidence enough, we ought not to faſt for ſuch things. And indeed as all other ſervice, ſo this of faſting, (as the Apoſtle ſtyles it) *Rom.* 12. 1. it is λογικὴ λατρεία *a reaſonable ſervice.*

For firſt, God expects from us, a demeanour ſuitable to our condition, and as he was juſtly condemn'd, that came without a wedding garment to the feaſt, ſo may he no leſſe, that wears it at a faſt.

Hoſea 11. 10. we are required *to walk after the Lord* in his diſpenſations, *and when he ſhall roar like a Lion, then ought we* (like good children) *to tremble*; 'Tis a piece of moſt intollerable inſolence, for men to laugh and ſport themſelves when God frowns: this in *Iſrael* was ſo offenſive, that, *Iſay* 22. 14 becauſe, when God call'd *to weeping and to mourning, there was found amongſt them joy and gladneſs, eating fleſh, and drinking wine,* &c. therefore *that iniquity ſhould not be purged from them, till they died:* It ſeems to be a moſt unpardonable, and killing iniquity; it adds wings to the leaden feet of vengeance, and ſets on work her iron hands; it makes her come faſter, and ſtrike deeper; it was this that brought in the deluge upon the ancient world, *Math.* 24. 38. becauſe *they were eating and drinking,* &c. therefore the flood came, and took them all away.

Secondly, a diſcreet obſervation of judgements (either near us or upon us,) will naturally beget ſuch a temper of mind in us, as will produce this duty; For in the way of a naturall operation, when we are in pain, in fear, in danger, or under any ſort of diſcontent, we weep,

we

we cry, we pray, we faſt; *when he ſlew them* (ſaith *David*) *then they ſought him*. *Damocles* (though ſet down at a plentifull Table) yet could not eat bit, becauſe of the Sword that was ſo ſubtilly hung over him; where ever there is a proſpect or fear of a judgement, it will produce this; tis true, if a man were a beaſt (and they are little leſs that do ſo) void of fore-ſight and conſideration, he might be allowed to graze on though it thunders, and like the ſwine eat his meat as luſtily an hour before his throat is cut, as at any time before; And let not our Hilariors take it ill, that I cannot range them amongſt any other ſort of cattel: For to be ſenſeleſs and ſenſuall at the approach of judgements, is for want of judgement; the very *Heathens* themſelves (when in this condition) were not ſtrangers to this duty: *Niniveh* faſted from the King to the beggar, and from the beggar to the beaſt for the threat that *Jonas* gave them: And this alſo makes it a reaſonable ſervice.

Thirdly, the reaſon of this duty further appears, in that the very outward act of faſting doth qualifie and diſpoſe a man unto thoſe other duties, that are more materiall; for if Prayer, Confeſſion, Contrition, are duties that do much conduce to deliverance and mercy; and if it be Gods uſuall method never to take us up till he finds us on our knees; when are we ſo fit for theſe duties, as when we faſt? *For the Corruptible body* (as you have it Wiſd. 9. 15.) *preſſeth down the ſoul, and the earthly Tabernacle, weigheth down the mind that muſeth upon many things*. Now we have many things to muſe upon in this duty, and faſting unclogs the ſoul, and takes off that mire and dirt, that hangs about the wings of the mind, whereby it mounts much higher in all ſpirituall acts; And therefore the caveat of Chriſt is

good,

good, *Luke* 21. 34. *Take heed to your ſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be over-charged with ſurfeting, and drunkneſſe,* (βαρυνθῶσι the word is) *ne ingraventur*, leſt your hearts be made heavy; Intemperance takes off the wheels of the ſoul, and makes it drive heavily.

A duty then it is, in that there are juſt occaſions of it, and ſtrong reaſons for it: but let it be never ſo much a duty, and never ſo often done, yet in ſome caſes God rejects it. And this tranſlates me over into the ſecond particular, which is to make inquiry in what caſes, and for what cauſes God does reject the faſtings and humiliations of men.

Rejected they are it ſeems ſomtimes: For in the ver. before the Text we find an expreſs prohibition: *You ſhall not faſt as you do this day*; and though it may ſeem ſtrange to finda Yea and a Nay in God, to command and inhibit the ſame thing, to make it ſometimes a duty, and yet charge it as a ſin; there muſt be ſome reaſons for this, and it nearly concerns us to inquire what they are.

Firſt, then God rejects our faſtings, when he finds nothing elſe but form and outward ſolemnity in them: It is the ſaying of Chriſt, *Luke* 16.15. *That which is highly eſteemed among men, is abomination in the ſight of God*; what is highly eſteemed among men? you may find it 1 *Sam.* 16. 7. *Man looketh on the outward appearance* but God does not, he cannot indure an out-ſide when it goes alone. Here in the Text God abhors that humiliation for this very reaſon, in that they made it up with a bundle of ceremonies, geſtures, cryings aloud, forbearing meat, looking ſad, and wearing ſackcloth, and ſo did only *Hiſtriones agere* perſonate a faſt, and were no more concerned in't, then the Actors are concerned in the matter of the plot. Secondly,

Secondly, God rejecteth our humiliations, when they are set on work meerly for the removall of judgements, or the attainder of mercies; to fast meerly for the one, as St. *James* tells us, that there is a faith of Devils, so we may call this the fast of Devils: that eternall humiliation and contrition that is now practis'd in hell, and those Howlings, Weepings, and gnashing of Teeth, that are there among the damned, are the result and effect of their never-dying torments. And to fast meerly for the attainder of the other, is no better then the fast of dogs and swine, who howl and make a noise because their trough is empty, and God gives it no better name, when he tells them, *Hos.* 7.14. *That they did not cry unto him with their heart, but howled upon their beds, and assembled themselves for Corn and Wine:* It is therefore the proper errand of an humbled people to confesse their sin, and to beg pardon and grace, and let providence take care for the rest; especially, when it stands encircled in a promise, that if we seek these first, *ex abundanti*, all other things shall be added to us. It concernes us of this Nation to consider this, and rightly to state the reason of our humiliations: for we have had fastings for judgements (and have one this day) but not one as yet for sin.

Thirdly, 'tis not every fasting for sin that God accepts, but in some cases does reject it, though it be for sin; And that is when we humble our selves for such sins, which lie in our own power to reform and remove: There is the same non-sense and absurditie in this case, as when an able lusty fellow lies in a ditch and cries God help; we have a pregnant instance of Gods rejection of our fastings in this case, in that of *Joshua*, *Josh.* 7. 6. A sin was committed by *Achan* and conceal-

ed, and the people for that sin were defeated more then once by the men of *Ai*; *Joshua* a publick Magistrate (upon this) *fell to his humiliation, rent his cloaths, fell to the earth upon his face, put dust upon his head and prayed*; But all this God rejects, and in the 10. verse gives a smart check unto it, *get thee up, wherefore lyest thou thus upon thy face?* and in the 13. verse calls him out to practise, *Up, Sanctifie the people*, and make a diligent enquiry after the accursed thing; God hath given the Magistrate a Sword, and he must not bear that Sword in vain. When sin and prophaneness abound in a Nation through the Magistrates neglect or cowardise, 'tis not his nor our fasting will remove it; because he hath a more effectuall means in his hands to do it: And in Gods account such a fast is as ridiculous as if an husbandman coming into his Vineyard, and finding it ore run with Bryars and Thorns, should fling aside his pruning hook and fall to his prayers, that God would weed them out.

Fourthly, God rejects the fastings of men when they except and reserve the practise of some beloved bosom sins unto themselves; this is noted with a more then ordinary indignation, *Jer.* 7. 9, 10, 11. *will you steal, murther, and commit adultery, and swear falsly, &c. and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name, and say we are delivered to do all these abominations? is this house which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? behold I (even I) have seen it, saith the Lord.* We may English it thus, will you come and fast before the Lord for fear of Famine and Pestilence, and put in exceptions to Rebellion, Regicide, Oppression, and the detainder of other mens bread? *Is this the Fast that I have chosen?* one such *Delilah* is enough

enough to deſtroy the ſtrongeſt *Sampſon*; one ſuch *Agag*, is ſufficient to undoe the talleſt *Saul*; one excepted ſin, will make void the beſt of faſts, and as long as *Achan*, with his wedge and garment, lay undiſcovered, unbrought out, let not *Iſrael* expect to proſper; ſuch a day as this ought to be a day of ſlaughter, and if God at another time will deal impartially with us for our ſins, then it concerns us now to deal impartially with them, and not to roul any one (no not the moſt beloved one,) as a ſweet morſell under the tongue, for fear it prove as the book which was given to Saint *John* to eat, *though ſweet* in the mouth, *yet bitter* in the belly; I have known the whole worke of a Chyrurgion defeated, by ſuch a partiality as this, and, becauſe he ſearched not at the bottome, though he skinn'd it over to the eye, the wound did feſter and ſuppurate, and he was forced to begin again; if you will make ſuant work in your faſting, bring out the bottome of your ſins, do not keep back a part, and this may heal the land.

Fiftly, The faſtings of men are rejected, when they will not be convinced of ſome ſins, that they are ſo indeed, as in the caſe of ſhedding innocent blood, when we have ſhed it, and call it juſtice; faſt while you will in this perſwaſion, God will not accept it, 'tis plain enough *Iſa.* 1. from the 10. to the 15. ver. in the 10. ver. God gives his own people very ſad names, *Rulers of Sodome, and people of Gomorrha*; and in the following verſes, he gives all their ſervices a very ſad reception: *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me? I delight not, &c. who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? incenſe is an abomination to me, the new Moons and Sabbaoths, and the calling of aſſemblies I can-*

not away with, it is iniquity, even the ſolemn meetings my ſoul hateth them, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them; and when ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear.

A ſtrange diſlike, and were there not a reaſon given for it, never enough to be wondred at, that God ſhould abandon the very ſervice that he does command, and what's that reaſon? God that does nothing without the higheſt reaſon, gives you his in the bottome of the 15. ver. (and indeed it is like ſome cholerick diſtemper in the bottome of the ſtomack, which makes us vomit up all we eat,) *Your hands are full of blood:* when blood is upon a Nation unacknowledged, unrepented, it mars all the ſervices of it.

Laſtly, God does reject the faſtings of men when they are undertaken to promote bad ends, and wicked purpoſes: ſuch a faſt was that of *Jezebel*, 1 *Kings* 21.9. ſhe proclamed a faſt, that under the colour of a treſpaſs againſt that proclamation, ſhe might obtain the life and vineyard of *Naboth:* And the faſtings of *Iſrael* are here rejected in this Chapter, becauſe they were undertaken to *promote ſtrife and debate*, and proſperouſly to *ſmite with the fiſt of wickedneſs*, and in the 3. ver. more eſpecially the reaſon is given, becauſe *in the day of your faſt you find pleaſure* that is, (as the vulgar renders it,) *inventur voluntas veſtra*, you bring with you your own wills, deſires, deſignes, and hope to carry them on by faſting, and as it followes, you *exact all your labours: Omnes debitores veſtros repetitis*, you beg of God a proſperous vengeance upon thoſe you think have wrong'd you; ſuch low and baſe ends do no more juſtifie a faſt then when a Robber prays for an advantageous encoun-

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ter, or a Pirate for a fair wind at Sea; If we thus bring in the tables of Money-changers into the houſe of God, and come here to truck with him, for the grant of our own deſires, he will over-throw thoſe tables, and ſcourge out ſuch Merchants: If we faſt to ſatisfy our own ambition, cruelty or covetouſneſs, we pervert the end of this duty, by bringing that hither to be cheriſhed, which ſhould be brought hither to be ſlain; and truly (if I might have leave, to give my judgment,) I cannot underſtand why ſo great a defeat has been given out from God, upon thoſe many humiliations (ſeemingly to me very ſolemn and ſerious,) which were acted by this Nation, and eſpecially in this place, for theſe laſt 20. years, inſomuch that we might expoſtulate as this people did in the 3. ver. *Wherefore have we faſted, and thou ſeeſt not; wherefore have we afflicted our ſouls and thou takeſt no knowledge?* I ſay, I can give no reaſon for ſuch a diſappointment, but this, we propoſed baſe and degenerate ends in our faſtings, we faſted to devour the comforts of other men with a better ſtomack, and to make our ſelves rich by their ruine.

You ſee then that the faſtings of men may be rejected, and you have ſeen in what caſes, 'twill now be ſeaſonable to put ſuch a queſtion, as he did in the Goſpell, *Good Maſter, what good thing muſt I do that I may obtain eternall life?* ſo here, what good thing muſt we do, to make our faſting acceptable unto God? The anſwer to this you will have in the third particular upon which I am now entring.

The proper ingredients therefore of a faſt to make it acceptable are not far to ſeek, for you may quickly find them in the 16, 17. ver. of *Iſa.* 1. *Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well.*

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First, *Ceaſe to do evil*, then do we faſt indeed when we faſt from ſin; 'tis not our witholding meat from the body, but our withdrawing all ſorts of ſupplements from our luſts, that makes a faſt; The luſts of our hearts have wide mouths and craving ſtomacks; Ambition, would never leave aſpiring, till it perch on the circle of the world; Covetouſneſs would ingroſſe all the riches of the *Indies*; Revenge, would glut it ſelf with the blood of others; and 'tis the work of thoſe that faſt, to tye up theſe, and keep them ſhort, to lay ſiedge to them, and intercept their proviſions, the beſt way to kill them is to ſtarve them out; That expreſſion of the Apoſtle is very apt, *Gal.*5.24. *They that are Chriſts have crucified the fleſh:* now, crucifixion is to faſten and bind down a living creature to that which is croſſe and contrary to it. Our luſts are thoſe living creatures, and to crucifie them is to feed them with contraries; Pride, would have a Crown of gold, give it a Crown of thorns; Luxury, would have the generous wine, give it vinegar mingled with gall; 'tis no faſting except this be done, and therefore Saint *Bernard*, doth elegantly upbraid a faſt that is kept without this, *Carnem non commedis, ſed commedis fratrem, à vino abſtines, ſed ab injuriis tibi non temperas*; 'tis a ſad faſt to forbear bread and mear, and the while to devour the fleſh and blood of thy brother.

Secondly, *Learn to do well*, this indeed is the very glory and accompliſhment of a faſt. But what that doing well is, that's the queſtion: To Worſhip God is to do well, to hear, to pray is to do well, but yet this is not the doing well is here required; yea, this doing well is rejected and ſpurned at of God, if there be no other ſorts of well-doing going with it; and what that

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is you have in the 17.ver.of *Isay* 1. *Relieve* (*or righten*) *the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widdow.*

'Tis clear then that the duties of Justice and Mercy are not onely the Ornaments, but the essentials of a fast; they are made so in the Text, *where there are any bands of wickedness they must be loosed, any heavy burdens they must be undone, any oppressed ones they must go free, any yoke it must be broken, any that are hungry thy bread must be dealt unto them, any that are poor and cast out they must be brought to thy house, any naked thou must cover him*; and good reason, for in the bottom of the verse, *he is thine own flesh*, at what wideness soever we are differenced by other things in the World, yet the poorest man alive is *thy own flesh*, and in all thy acts of mercy to him, thou art mercifull to a part of thy self; This is *the fast*, and how importunately the Spirit of God harps upon this string, and points us (as it were with the finger) to this, even to this sort of duty, you may further see in *Zach.* 7.9, 10. where after a reproof given to their formall fastings, ver. 5. a rule is subjoyned for them what to do: *Execute true Judgement, and shew Mercy and Compassion every man to his Brother, and oppresse not the Widdow, nor the Fatherless, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his Brother in your heart.* It is a strange preference, and much to be wonder'd at, which God gives to the duties we owe to man, before those we owe to himself: methinks it were enough to say that the second Commandement is *like unto the first*, Math. 22.39. but to say, *first go and be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift*; to say, *I will have Mercy rather then Sacrifice*, as Gods goodness in this is to be wondred at,

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ſo mans duty from this is to be concluded on, that our works of Mercy, Juſtice, Charity, muſt be done by us with as great a zeal, and with a greater earlineſs, then thoſe very ſervices we do to God.

There is now leſt nought remaining to trouble your patience with, but my application and your practiſe. You are here met in the houſe of God, and what to do? to faſt; and for what? the ſuſpicions and fears of a famine like to come upon us, from our late abundance of Rain, threatning to ſpoile the Fruits of the Earth. 'Tis very well, that any thing will drive us home to God; but yet, it is obſervable how early we are in this duty; we faſt for a judgement that is not yet upon us, further then the fear and ſuſpicion of it: It would be much more ingenious, to be early and quick in faſting for the ſins of the Nation, as we are for the dangers of it, thoſe (I am ſure) are ripe enough, and ready for the ſickle; we are much beyond the ſuſpicions of ſin, we are under the Commiſſions of it; and yet, as yet we have had no faſt for theſe, it would very much beautifie the beginnings of this bleſſed revolution, and fortunate change of things we live under, to begin with ſuch a faſt as this: but it ſeems we love our bellies very well, and as ſome followed Chriſt for the loaves, ſo we faſt for fear we ſhall want the loaves, we faſt for fear that we ſhall faſt.

But ſince it is ſo, that the work of this day ſtands ſtated to my hands, upon this bottom, it will be convenient before I can direct you how to be rid of this judgement, to give you my judgement whence it comes: For aſſuredly 'tis no *brutum fulmen*, no arrow ſhot at rovers, no accident ſlip'd out of the womb of chance without any ſignification in it: no, no; as God

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is the higheſt reaſon, ſo all that he does comes from it, and is guided by it, his very judgements themſelves are reaſonable judgements: and therefore though many things come forth from God, the cauſes of which ſhall not be known untill the day *of the revelation of his righteouſneſs*; yet in the generall he bids us believe, and would have us know, *that he hath not done without cauſe all that he hath done*, Ezek. 14. 23.

Well then, a reaſon for this judgement there is, and what is it? to tell you that it is wickedneſs in the generall, is to fling an whole loaf at your head, and not to cut it for you; but yet the Pſalmiſt tells us ſo, *Pſal.* 107. 34. *He turneth a fruitfull land into barrenneſs for the wickedneſſe of them that dwell therein*, and as God told *Adam*, *Gen.* 3. 17. that the ground was curſed for his ſake (that is, for his ſin) ſo if our ground now be like to undergoe a Curſe, it is for our ſins; And for what ſins? Certainly, for ſome ſins above others; for as the Clouds ſend down no other waters then what the Earth ſends up, ſo there is ſomething come up from us before God, that has drawn down our preſent judgements on us.

There have been divers interpretations paſt on this late abundance of Rain; The Star-gazer charges it upon ſome notable configuration in the Heavens, but yet (as our late Aſtrologers confeſſed they could not read our late revolution, *and bleſſed return* of the King in any conjunction of the Planets, but gave it clearly up to be a miracle) ſo if you now examine their Almanacks, you ſhall not find a word fore-telling all this foul weather; which makes me think it is more then a naturall, it is a judicial effect.

And therefore others (that are no good friend to our

preſent wellfare) will adventure to make a malicious gloſs upon the preſent judgement, and whiſper it at leaſt in corners, that it is for the Kings coming in, for our importunate deſires of his return, and for our great rejoycings at his preſence: And they obſerve (with ſome pleaſure to themſelves) the great Rain that fell at the firſt treatment of His Majeſty in the City, the great Rain and Thunder upon the day of his Coronation, and the great Rains that have continued ever ſince, and they make bold with Scripture to prove this to be the cauſe of the judgement from 1 *Sam.* 12. 17. where *Samuel* tells the people thus: *I will call unto the Lord, and he ſhall ſend thunder and rain: that ye may perceive and ſee that your wickedneſs is great, which ye have done in the ſight of the Lord, in asking you a King.* But I queſtion not, but this interpretation is too private and wide enough: Therefore to come nearer home, what may the ſins be? Truly the Nation ſtands now guilty of ſuch ſins, that I could find in my heart rather to pray for a famine then to pray againſt it; For as faſting in the way of a phyſicall operation is good to cure many diſeaſes, ſo there be many ſins (eſpecially thoſe of pride and luxury) which famine would be an excellent means to remove, by removing the food and fomentations of them.

What our ſins are, may be read in the very face of the judgement; that as the *Hetrurians* of old erected a Colledge of wiſe men to be their *fulminum interpretes*, their Expoſitors of Thunder-bolts; and as Phyſicians now by the ſignature they obſerve in a plant will gueſs ſhrewdly, what it is wholſome for and hurtfull to: So there is a ſignature in the preſent judgement, and by the Features and Complexion that is in it we may

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Calculate its Nativity, and judge whence it comes.

First then, what think you of the sin of Sabbaoth-breaking? a sin now more frequent, impudent, and unpunished, then in those late black days, in which greater sins were counted none at all; This blessed day is now as much mangled and broken, as once the Lord and Master of it was; and as the Poet deriding the immoderate dresses of a Girle, told her that she was *minima pars sui*, so is this day, so divided, and loaden with affairs and sins, that it is now become the least part of it self, and you may seek for a Sabbaoth, in a Sabbaoth, and yet not find it. And whereas it is an holy day, now other days are innocent to this, those we spend upon our callings, this upon our sins, and now do but see how this judgment is fitted to this sin, *Lev.* 26. 34. where *Moses* tells the people *that the land should enjoy her Sabbath*, and lie desolate: because the men of the land will not keep their Sabbaoths, therefore the land it self shall keep hers; and such a Sabbaoth is now like to be kept for this year by a great part of our land.

Secondly, next what think you of the sin of swearing? a sin whereby the divel cheats a man more then by any, by being damned for it, and getting nothing by it: never did bullets fly thicker in the hottest battel, then oaths now in this wicked City; you cannot pass the streets, but your ears will be box'd by an oath at every step, and 'tis a wonder to me, if these arrows which are shot bolt up-right and levell'd point-blanck at God, do not recoyle upon the heads of those that shot them; but how this sin does more particularly contribute to the judgement we now fear, you may see *Jer.* 23. 10. where we are told that because of Oaths (Curses) *the land mourneth*. There is a sort of ground which husband-

men do call weeping ground, and 'tis barren and good for little; we have such now, whole Countries lie bathed in the teares of Heaven, and that because of Oaths; for if by them we pull God out of Heaven, and tear him in pieces between our teeth, if we use his name so vainly as if there were no such being, 'tis no marvell if the Clouds tumble down upon us, when we leave none in Heaven to govern and hold them up: He that thinks or lives as if there were no God, shall be cared for here, as if there were none.

Thirdly, what think you of the sin of *Adultery?* whether this may not beget a Famine, *Jer.*5.7,8. *when I fed them to the full, they then committed Adultery, and assembled themselves by Troops in the Harlots houses, they were as fed horses in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbours wife*, shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? and what is the visitation for these things? you shall find it verse 17. *a famine*, this that we fear, though coming another way, yet from the same sin; *They shall eat of thine harvest, and thy bread which thy Son and Daughters should eat, they shall eat of thy flocks and thy herds, they shall eat of thy Vines and thy Fig trees, &c.* and it is a punishment both just and proper, if thou borrow strength from the creature to squander it away upon unlawful beds, 'tis fit that God should take the creature from thee: If a stallion grow unruly, tye him up to an empty rack.

Fourthly, what think you of *Intemperance?* a sin that brings forth this suspected judgement, both physically and judicially too. Physically, 'tis no marvell if there be a scarcity when we fill our Tables to such a height to feed a few, as will suffice for many, committing a miracle contrary to that of Christ, who fed 5000. with five

five loaves, and we feed but five with ſome ſcores of diſhes.

And judicially this judgement lies much at the door of this ſin, to wit the *Luxury* of man; for if you mark it, this plague of Rain hurts not the graſs ſo much as the grain, the horſe and ox are provided for well enough, nay the Countyman tells me that cattle are like to be gainers by't, it is becauſe they are temperate; but 'tis the Luxurious and debauched part of mankind that are like to be the loſers, in that Wheat and Barly are the greateſt ſufferers in this deluge, and he that told me that the Barrels of Beer and the Buts of Wine were ſeen to ſwim about the Cellars here in Town, made me preſently think it was to puniſh our Drunkenneſs; For as a Father ſpills the Wine and breaks the Cup when he ſees his child but in danger to be fluſter'd, ſo God does language it in this judgement, that it was our Luxury that brought it, by deſtroying the Tooles and Utenſils of that ſin.

Fifthly and laſtly, I will mention one ſin more which (I fear) hath contributed ſomewhat more then the reſt to this judgement, and that is our publick defayler in the duties mentioned in the Text, *The want of Juſtice and Charity*; and indeed (to tell you the truth) I choſe this Text, and have ſpoken all this while upon it, onely to introduce what followes; and give me leave to be very plain and home with you.

There is a party yet alive in *England* (if they be alive, and indeed 'tis as much as they are) that have been, and do ſtill own the name of *true Engliſhmen* (for the reſt live only by an *Amneſty*, and are *Engliſhmen* but of one year old) but theſe I am ſpeaking for are *true old Engliſhmen*, and great ſufferers for being ſo: in that,

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they live and are let pass, not only without *reward*, but *restitution*, not only without *respect* of others, but the *recovery* of their own. Astrologers have amused the World of late with reports of strange and wonderfull *Conjunctions*; never were there such strange and monstrous couples as are now seen marching together in England, *Loyalty and rags*, *Loyalty and lice*, *Loyalty and hunger*, *Loyalty and a prison*: Poor Loyalty! the flower and credit of every good Christian, how hardly art thou used, to be unequally yoked with such as these! his complaint in the Gospel about wages was nothing, in comparison to that which these can make, *Math.*20.12. *These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equall unto us, which have born the burthen and heat of the day*: but these men can say we have born the burthen and heat of the day, and have not received a penny for it, but they received it who did nothing, if not worse then nothing.

'Tis a smart and a true one of him that said, *It seems a hard piece of justice, that the price of publick freedom (when restored) should be the ruine only of such as did assert it.* 'Tis the fashion of this Town to give you once a week their *bill of mortality*, and to instance the severall *diseases* by which they dyed; but I find not this *disease* mentioned, *so many dyed with the sense of a dis-regarded loyalty*: with a little paines I could present you with a black Bill of at least a hundred Gentlemen that dyed in and about this Town by no other disease but this, and want; and yet (as *Iob*) though they saw no deliverance, *they still held fast their integrity*, and carryed it with them to be regarded and rewarded in another World: I could shew you whole Cart-loads of old shooes and mouldy bread, all the housh old-stuff that is left to these

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poor Gibeonites; I could tell you (from a very good hand) of a ſtout *Royaliſt*, that (like *Lazarus*) came into our *Hall* and carefully gather'd up the parings of bread, which not only the men, but the mice and dogs had left; (for our City dogs are ſo finely fed, that they ſcorn to eat that, which he was glad to find.)

And 'tis this endangers a famine, and provokes it; there is a *ſignature* in the very judgement, like *Adonibezeck*, Judges 1. 7. *As I have done, ſo God hath requited me*; ſo God goes about this way to make you and them all of a piece, by taſting the ſame *ſauce* with them, and by letting you to feel what 'tis to be in want; methinks, tis the very language of Heaven, *If you will not help them, the earth ſhall not help you:* God will reduce your fair fields and fatned ſelves to the ſame leanneſs with them, and then t'will be in faſhion to want when great mean wear it.

Let me give you my juſt fear, that as the preſent unkindneſs (if not injuſtice) to this ſort of men is very great, ſo I do believe you will never thrive, neither in Creatures nor in Councels, nor in any undertakings till this be amended: For 'tis a crying ſin, if St. *Iames* be to be believed, who tells us, *Iames* 5. 4. *That the hire of the labourers, which is kept back by fraud, cryeth, and with that* lowdneſs, *that it enters into the eares of the Lord of Sabbath*; and what does this cry obtain? *Miſeries*, verſe 1. and what Miſeries? *Your Riches are corrupted, and your Garments moth-eaten, your Gold and Silver is canker'd, and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire:* And as nothing thrived in *Iſrael* as long as *Achan* ſate abrood on his ſtolen wedge and garment, ſo though we gild over our Plunders and Sequeſtrations with the ſpeci-

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ous title of the juſt acquiſts of war, yet let not *England* hope to proſper till there be ἀποκαταστασις παντων, Acts 3. 21. *a reſtitution of all things.*

It is this juſt and moſt advantagious work which I commend with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs to your care and Councell; that as you have been indifferently ſevere in the *vindictive* part of juſtice, ſo you would ſhew your ſelves men in the *reſtorative* part of it, and fill up your *office* in both parts of it *by puniſhment of evil doers, and the praiſe of them that have done well*, 1 Pet. 2. 14.

If you would ſtand free from the judgement you fear, do this and it will prove an Antidote: Ile commend to you but this one inſtance for your warrant and incouragement, 2 *Sam.* 21. in the 1. verſe we read of a *famine* that was *in the dayes of David, and David enquired of the Lord,* and his anſwer was, *It is for Saul and for his bloudy houſe, becauſe he ſlew the Gibeonites:* No part of the Hiſtory tells me that he ſlew them, which makes me think he only uſed them hardly, encreas'd their *Servitude*, and made their lives a burthen to them, and indeed this is a piece of *murder*; and for this there was a *famine.*

Have we no ſuch *Gibeonites* among us? that are as yet thought good for nothing elſe, but to cleave wood and carry water, to do the drudgery and mean offices of the Nation? we have, what need we be at the coſt to Trade ſo far as the *Indies* for Blacks and Slaves, when we have enough at home? neither let us any more upbraid the *Mahometan cruelty* for making vaſſals of ſtrangers, and binding ſuch only to the oar whom they knew not under any other notion, then of *a juſt price of war*; we make Slaves among our ſelves, and

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that of those who have been at the greatest charge for our *liberty*. Have we not a people endeavoured to be suppressed and destroyed by our *late Saul*? Did any thing but bonds, and chains, and blocks, and halters, *abide them* here at home? and was any place *but a Famaica*, a *Poneropolis* provided for them abroad? And as yet, these (the just heirs and owners of relief) are not relieved: 'Tis not a further vengeance on their enemies that they desire, nor the hanging up of *the Sons of Saul*; what will the bloud of others do them good? if they loved that, they would never have been so prodigall of their own, what then? let our *David* send for them as *David* did for these, and debate the matter with them, as he did, verse 3. *what shall I do for you, and wherewith shall I make the attonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?*

This inheritance of the Lord (the Land of our Nativity) is like (it seems for this year at least) to go without *a blessing*; let the same words be heard from the lips of our *David*, and let the same question be put in your Councels, *what shall we do for you?* 'Tis quickly answer'd in the Text, which sets me down where I first set up: *Loose the bands of wickedness, undoe the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, deal your bread to the hungry, bring the poor that are cast out to your houses, cover the naked, and hide not your selves from your own flesh*; and though it may seem a work of cost, yet it is not without reward, ver. 8, &c. *Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousnesse shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall gather you up, Then shall you call, and the Lord shall answer, you shall cry, and he shall say, here I am: Then shall the Lord guide you continually, and satisfie*

your ſoul in drought, and make fat your bones and you ſhall be like a watered garden, and like a ſpring of water, whoſe waters fail not. And you ſhall build the old waſt places, you ſhall raiſe foundations for many generations, and you ſhall be called the repairers of the breach, and the reſtorers of paths to dwell in.

Which Duties that ye may do, and which Mercies that you may obtain, the Father of mercies grant, through the Merits and Mediation of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.